JLRankin:lmj - 5/20/64

MAY 19 1964

Lt. Col. Allison G. Folsom
Reserve Branch
Personnel Department
Headquarters United States Marine Corps
Washington, D. C.

Dear Colonel Folsom:

The Marine Corps records supplied us reveal that on 3 May 1957, Lee Harvey Oswald was granted "clearance to handle classified matter up to and including Confidential." However, we have received sworn testimony from John Z. Donovan, who was Assistant Operations Officer and Training Officer at Marine Air Control Squadron No. 9 in Santa Ana, to the effect that Oswald's job required a Secret clearance.

Moreover, two of Oswald's fellow enlisted men at MACS-9 have testified that Oswald lost his clearance and was therefore relegated to non-sensitive jobs.

It would be helpful to the work of the Commission if you could determine whether Oswald ever received clearance to handle higher than Confidential material, and whether any clearance given to him was taken away. If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact Mr. John Hart Ely of our staff by telephone.

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

cc: Mr. Rankin
Mr. Willens
Mr. Ely

J. Lee Rankin
General Counsel

The cover letter to CD 978 (attached) confirms my interpretation of the DOD's reply, which is CE 1961, as at best evasive. (See memo on Oswald's security clearance, 3/24/68.) Reread part (c) of CE 1961 in conjunction with the cover letter. Although the Commission's request was directed to Lt. Col. Folsom of the Personnel Department (Why not to ONI? Presumably because the Commission realized by then how hard it would be to get information out of that agency), he was asked to "determine" whether Oswald ever had higher than Confidential clearance. Folsom's "reply" consists primarily of information from Oswald's personnel file, about which Folsom had testified on May 1, and which the cover letter of May 19 shows had been studied by the Commission. Folsom added a confusing but essentially empty statement indicating that if Oswald did Secret work he presumably had Secret clearance. Folsom either did not check to see what work Oswald had done, or did not wish to deny Donovan's testimony, noted in Rankin's letter, that Oswald's job in fact required a Secret clearance. I think that we may take this as an admission that Oswald did have at least Secret clearance.